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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, STUDENT PETER PARKER GAINED THE PROPORTIONATE STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF AN ARACHNID! ARMED WITH HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS, THE RELUCTANT SUPER HERO STRUGGLES WITH SINISTER SUPER-VILLAINS, MAKING ENDS MEET, AND MAINTAINING SOME SEMBLANCE OF A NORMAL LIFE!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN!™

POWER PLAY!

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SPECIAL THANKS TO CODY DeMATTEIS FOR HIS INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE!

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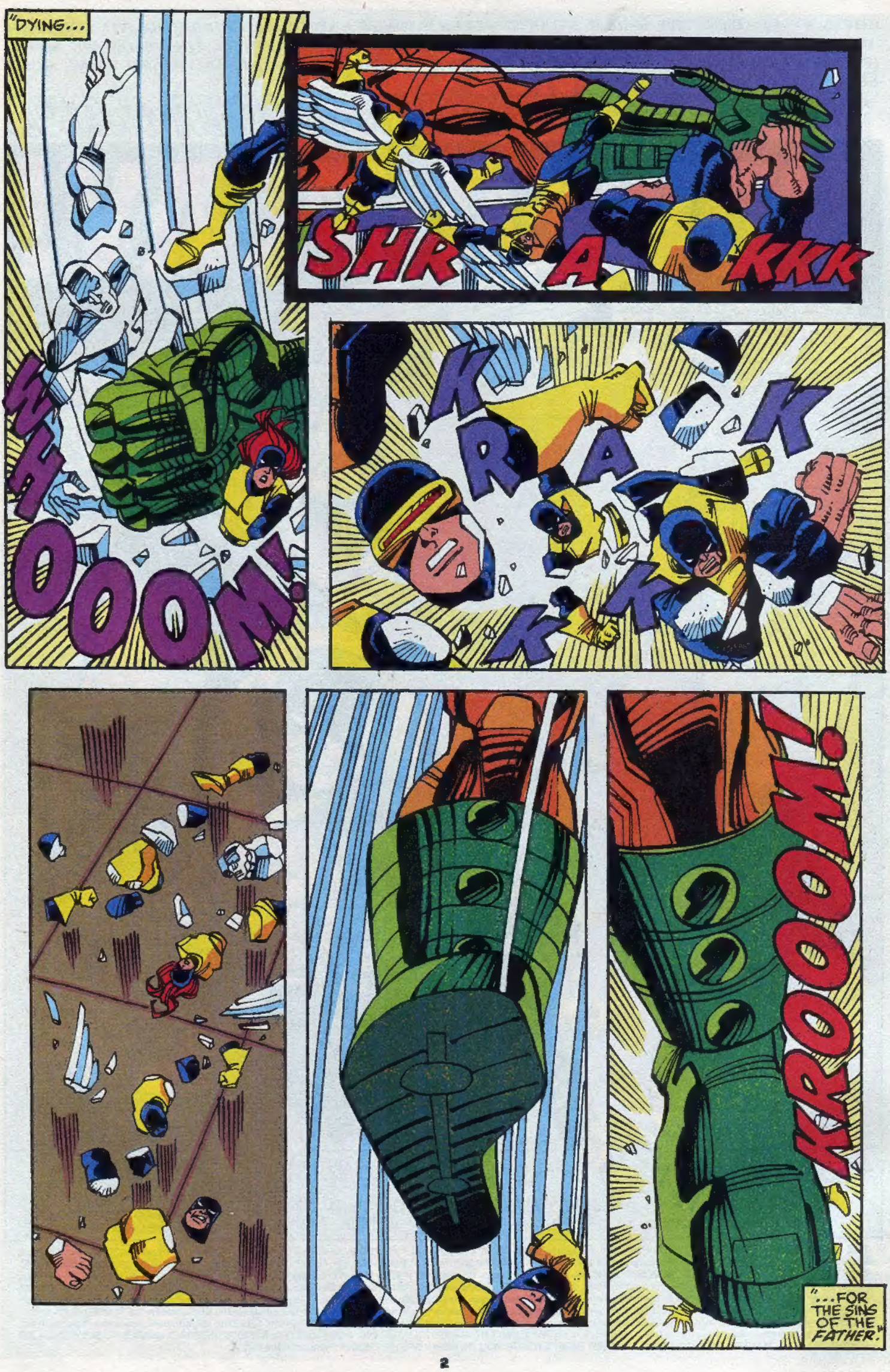
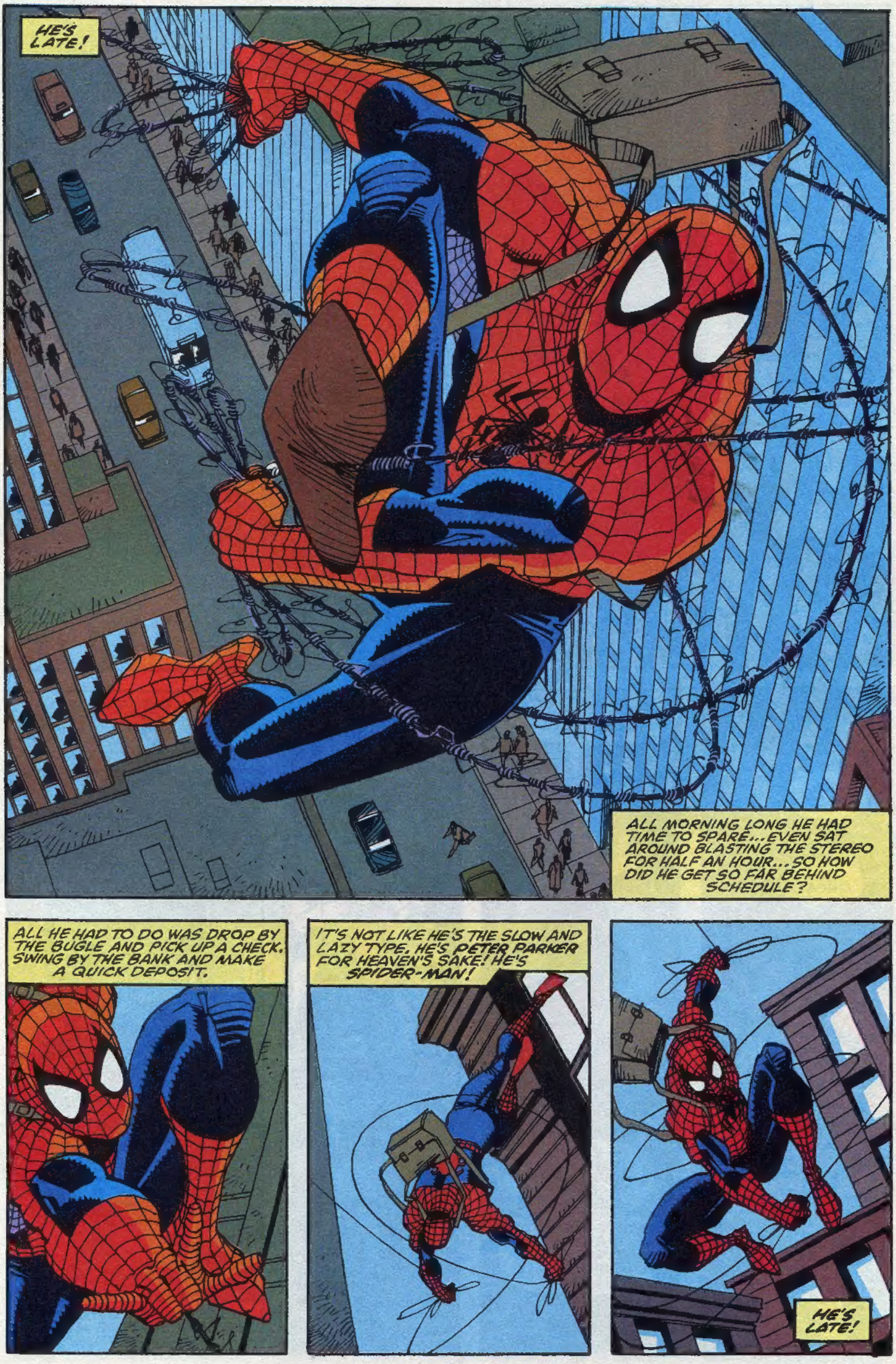
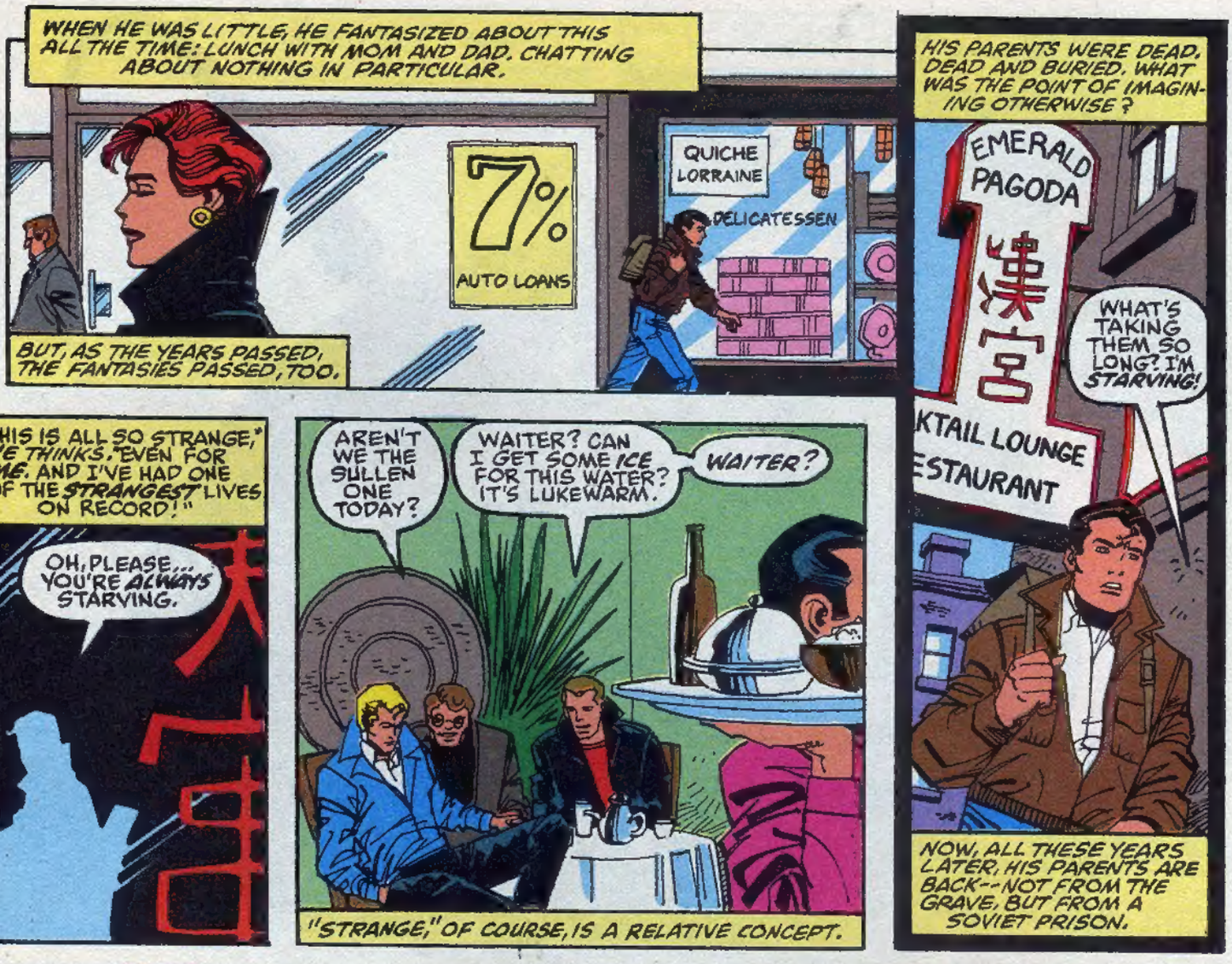

"DYING...
WHOOOM!
SHR A KKK
K R A K K K
KROOOM!
"...FOR THE SINS OF THE FATHER."

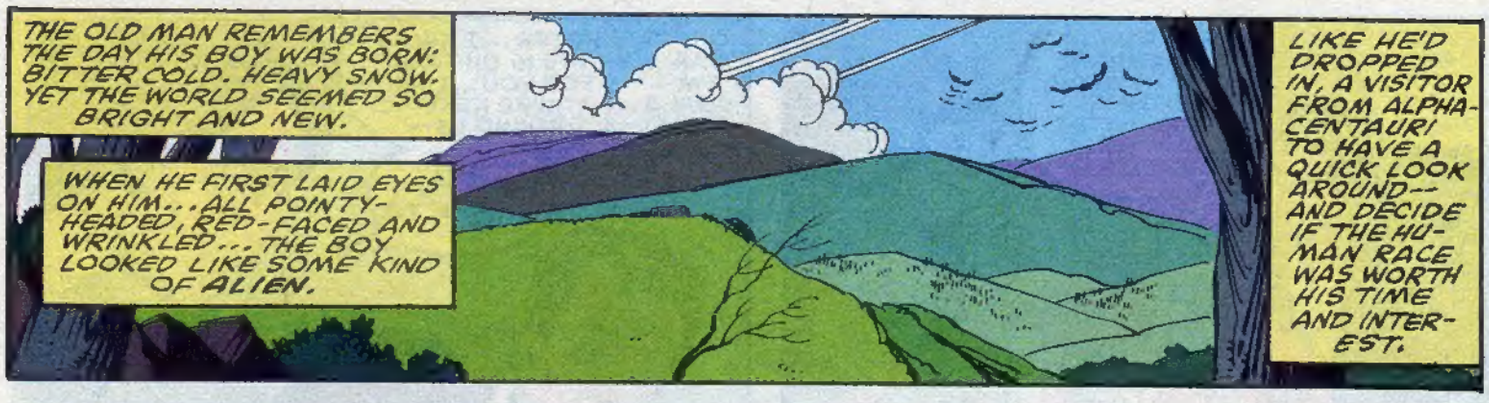

HE'S LATE!
ALL MORNING LONG HE HAD TIME TO SPARE... EVEN SAT AROUND BLASTING THE STEREO FOR HALF AN HOUR... SO HOW DID HE GET SO FAR BEHIND SCHEDULE?
ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS DROP BY THE BUGLE AND PICK UP A CHECK. SWING BY THE BANK AND MAKE A QUICK DEPOSIT.
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S THE SLOW AND LAZY TYPE. HE'S PETER PARKER FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! HE'S SPIDER-MAN!
HE'S LATE!

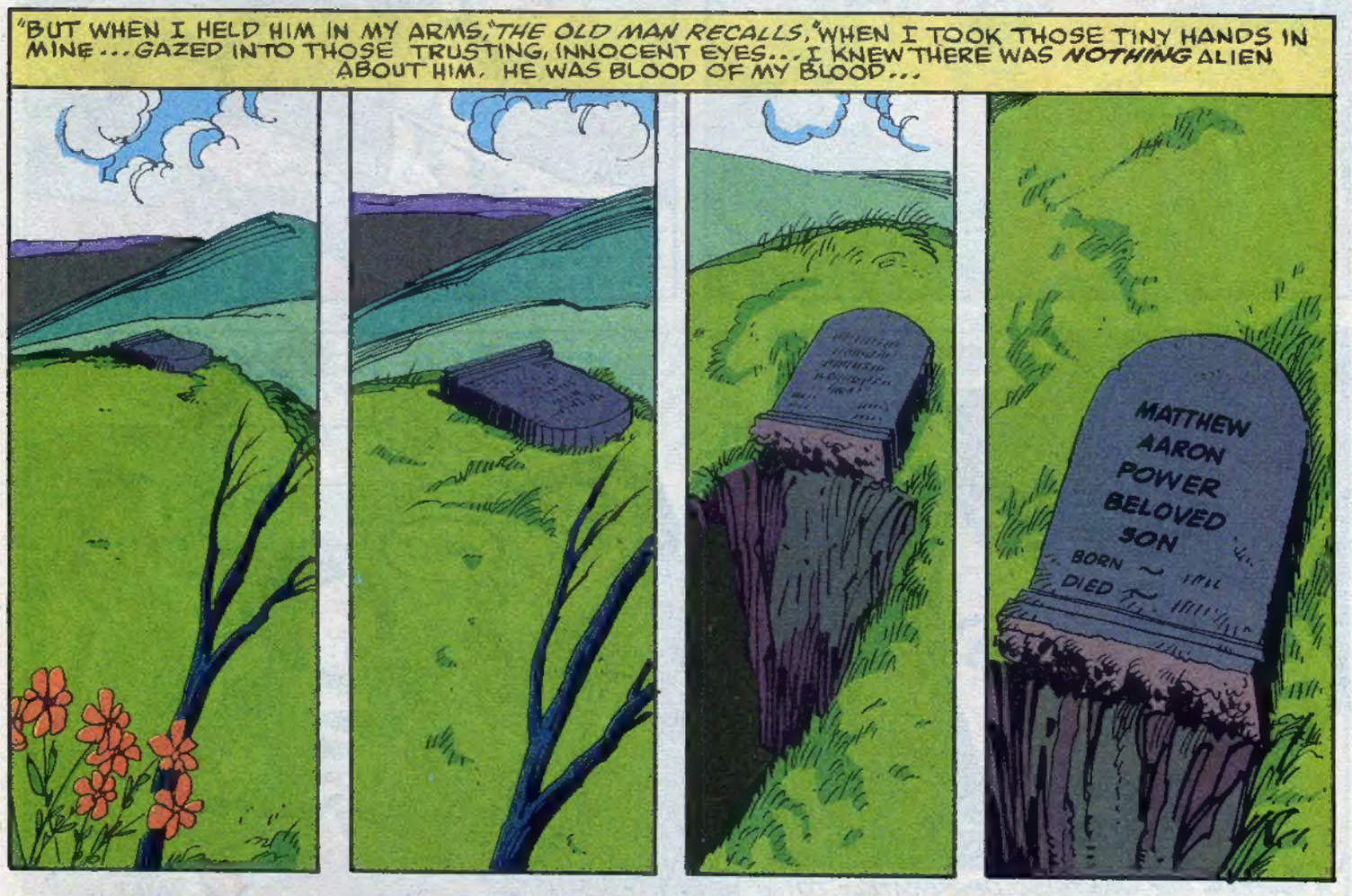
AND HE'S WORRIED: "I DON'T WANT THEM TO THINK I'M LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME.
"WHAT IF THEY THINK I'M SOME IRRESPONSIBLE JERK?
"WHAT IF THEY THINK I DON'T CARE?
"WHAT IF--"
MY SPIDER-SENSE--!
JUST A MILD BUZZ, BUT--
HEY... YOU!
OH... GREAT.
MY EYESIGHT MAY NOT BE SO GOOD ANY MORE--
--BUT I KNOW A HALF-NAKED MAN WHEN I SEE ONE!
YOU'D BETTER GET YOUR TUSH OUTTA HERE... BEFORE I CALL THE COPS!
I'M GOING! I'M GOING!
???!!!
ONE HOP AND HE'S OUT OF THE ALLEY, ONTO THE STREET. BUT THE NOISE OF THE WEST VILLAGE CAN'T DROWN OUT THE NOISE IN HIS HEAD.
A CONSTANT STREAM OF NEUROTIC CHATTER. A GEYSER OF WORRY.

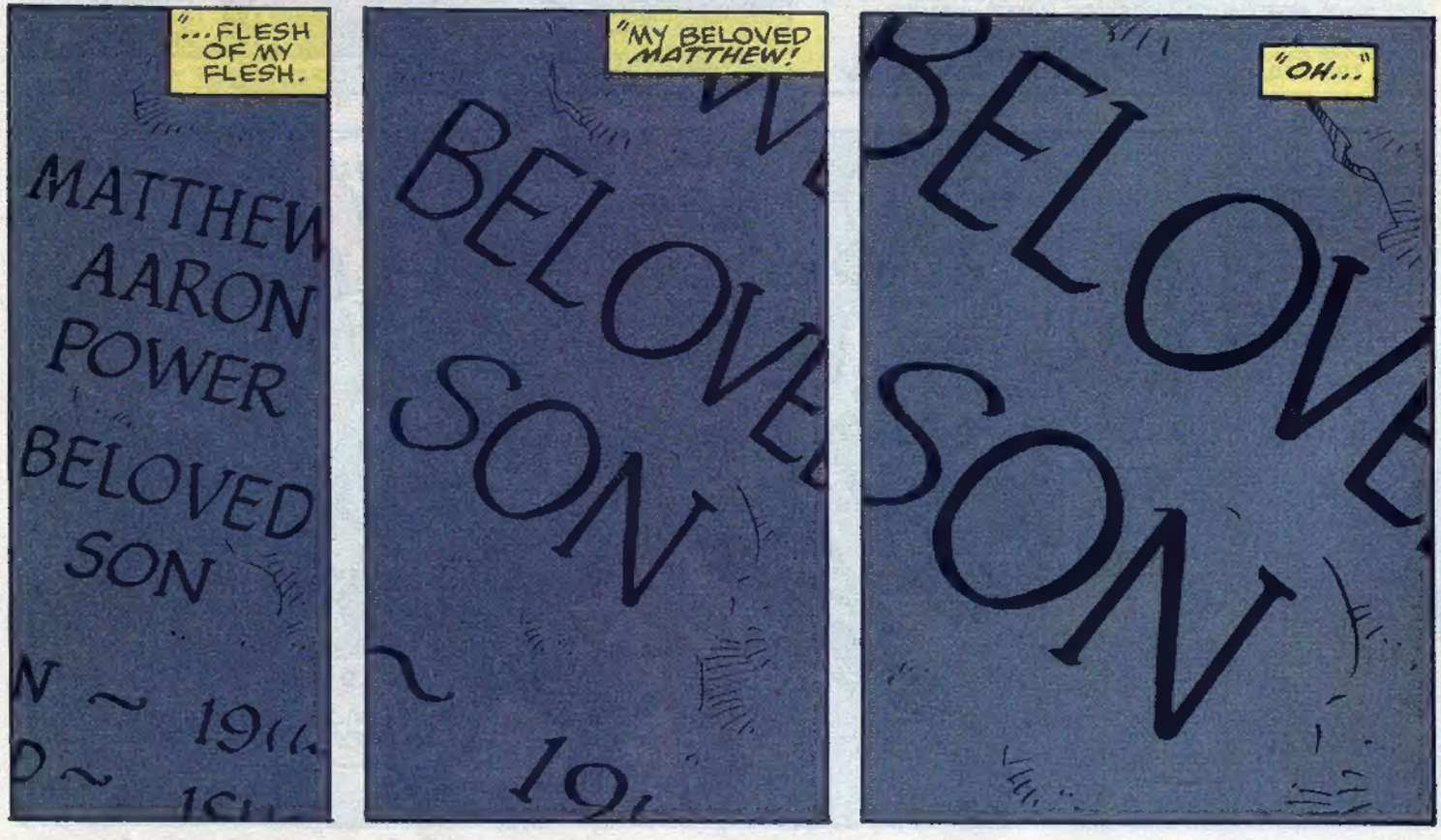

WHEN HE WAS LITTLE, HE FANTASIZED ABOUT THIS ALL THE TIME: LUNCH WITH MOM AND DAD. CHATTING ABOUT NOTHING IN PARTICULAR.
7%
AUTO LOANS
QUICHE LORRAINE
DELICATESSEN
BUT, AS THE YEARS PASSED, THE FANTASIES PASSED, TOO.
HIS PARENTS WERE DEAD, DEAD AND BURIED. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF IMAGINING OTHERWISE?
EMERALD PAGODA
WHAT'S TAKING THEM SO LONG? I'M STARVING!
NOW, ALL THESE YEARS LATER, HIS PARENTS ARE BACK--NOT FROM THE GRAVE, BUT FROM A SOVIET PRISON.
"THIS IS ALL SO STRANGE," HE THINKS. "EVEN FOR ME. AND I'VE HAD ONE OF THE STRANGEST LIVES ON RECORD!"
OH, PLEASE... YOU'RE ALWAYS STARVING.
AREN'T WE THE SULLEN ONE TODAY?
WAITER? CAN I GET SOME ICE FOR THIS WATER? IT'S LUKEWARM.
WAITER?
"STRANGE," OF COURSE, IS A RELATIVE CONCEPT.
SOMETHING THESE THREE YOUNG MEN UNDERSTAND ALL-TOO WELL.
YOU WEREN'T LIKE THIS IN THE GOOD OL' DAYS. REMEMBER -- WHEN WE USED TO SNEAK OUT OF THE SCHOOL... CATCH A TRAIN DOWN HERE TO THE VILLAGE--
--AND INDULGE OUR YOUTHFUL APPETITES INTO THE WEE HOURS?
AH... WHAT THE HECK.
WARREN WORTHINGTON III.
HANK McCOY.
BOBBY DRAKE.
MUTANTS, X-MEN, BUT MOST IMPORTANT, OLD FRIENDS.
INDULGE OUR APPETITES? WE USED TO GO TO COFFEE SHOPS, STARE AT ALL THE N.Y.U. GIRLS FOR HOURS--
--AND THEN GO HOME ARGUING ABOUT WHICH ONE OF US WOULD HAVE MADE TIME, IF WE'D HAD THE NERVE TO OPEN OUR MOUTHS AND ACTUALLY SAY SOMETHING TO THEM.
AU CONTRAIRE, MON AMI. I CAN THINK OF A DOZEN TIMES WHEN YOU USED YOUR INESTIMABLE CHARM TO CONVINCE ONE OF THE YOUNG LOVELIES TO JOIN US FOR A CUP OF CAPPUCCINO--

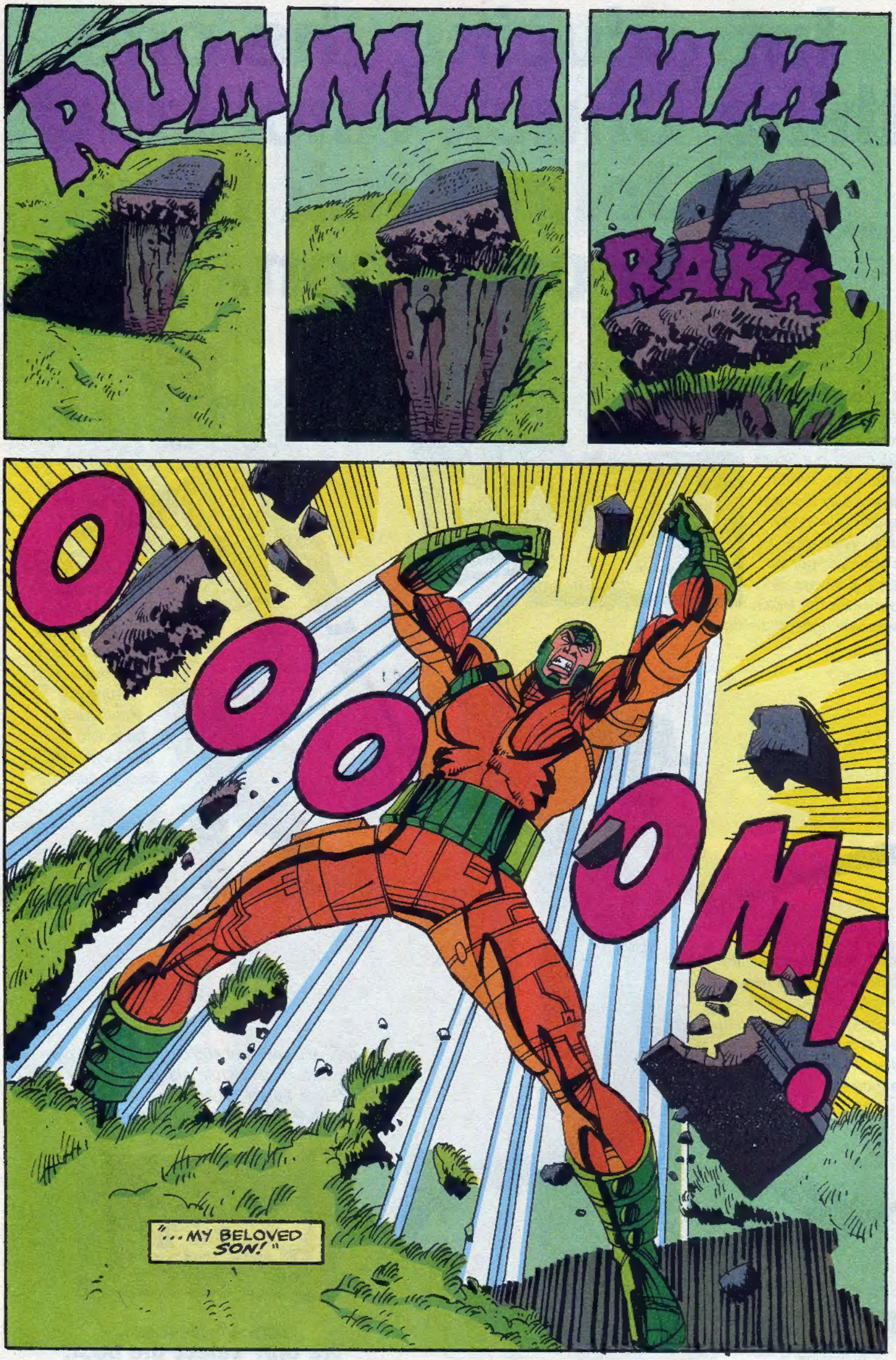
--AFTER WHICH I'D SPIN THEIR DELICATE HEADS WITH THE ROMANTIC MUSINGS OF SHELLEY, BYRON, AND KEATS--
RIGHT. AND THEN THEY'D SPEND THE WHOLE NIGHT TALKING TO BOBBY.
SCOTT!
SCOTT SUMMERS, TO BE PRECISE.
LEADER OF THE X-MEN'S BLUE TEAM.
REMEMBER? "OH, ISN'T HE JUST THE CUTEST THING! HE REMINDS ME OF MY LITTLE BROTHER!"
AND THE THREE OF US WOULD SIT AROUND TWIDDLING OUR THUMBS WHILE THEY PINCHED BOBBY'S CHEEKS AND PLAYED WITH HIS HAIR.
LISTEN... "SLIM"-- I CAN'T HELP IT IF I WAS NATURALLY ADORABLE.
YOU WERE NATURALLY SAFE. THEY KNEW AN APPLE-CHEEKED SIXTEEN YEAR OLD WAS NO DANGER.
WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT, SCOTT SO, IT WAS YOU THEY ALWAYS WANTED--
--BUT YOUR HEART, ALAS, BELONGED TO ANOTHER.
SPEAKING OF WHOM-- WHERE IS JEAN?
EMERALD
DAGOD
SHE DECIDED TO DO A LITTLE SHOPPING. SAID SHE'LL MEET US LATER FOR THE MOVIE.
CHINESE RE
BUT THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR REUNION LUNCH! ALL US OLD-TIMERS GETTING MISTY-EYED AND NOSTALGIC... WITHOUT ANY OF THE NEW KIDS AROUND.
JEAN SAID SHE DIDN'T WANT TO GET IN THE WAY OF OUR MALE BONDING.
ERAL
AGOD
IN OTHER WORDS, SHE KNOWS HOW OBNOXIOUS THE FOUR OF US ARE WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER.
EXACTLY, WARREN. EXACTLY.
URANT
STRANGE MEN. STRANGE LIVES.
AHMED
STRANGE COINCIDENCES DRAWING THEM TOGETHER.
I'M SO SORRY I'M LATE. I THOUGHT I'D BE DONE EARLIER... I REALLY RUSHED, BUT--
INDIAN CUISINE
SON, SON... STOP APOLOGIZING!
YOU WERE ONLY TEN MINUTES LATE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
EVEN WHEN HE WAS LITTLE HE WAS LIKE THIS. REMEMBER, MARY?
YOU USED TO LOOK AT HIM, LYING THERE IN A CRIB... HIS LITTLE FACE ALL SCRUNCHED UP... AND SAY, "MY GOD, RICHARD...
"...I'D SWEAR HE'S WORRYING ABOUT THE FATE OF THE WORLD!"
A MOTHER AND FATHER REMINISCING ABOUT HIS INFANCY!
THERE ARE SOME WHO'D FIND THIS VAGUELY EMBARRASSING OR FLAT-OUT ANNOYING.

PETER PARKER ISN'T ONE OF THEM.
YOU REALLY REMEMBER THAT? I MEAN, ALL THESE YEARS LATER AND YOU CAN STILL--
KLUNK
OH, MAN... I'M SUCH A CLUMSY--
PETER...I KNOW THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR YOU...I KNOW YOU'RE NERVOUS AROUND US--
--BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE.
WE'RE NOT JUDGING YOU. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY AND IMPRESS US.
WE LOVE YOU, FOR WHO YOU ARE.
AND WE'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU... NO MATTER WHAT.
A PART OF HIM WANTS SO DESPERATELY TO BELIEVE HER. BUT ANOTHER PART WANTS JUST AS DESPERATELY NOT TO. ONCE BEFORE, SOMEONE HE LOVED RETURNED "MIRACULOUSLY" FROM THE DEAD AND HE OPENED HIS HEART TO HER...
...ONLY TO FIND THAT SHE WAS A FRAUD, PART OF YET ANOTHER TWISTED SCHEME...
HUH?!
SON-- WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
...TO DESTROY HIS LIFE.
AT FIRST HE PANICS: "SHE TOUCHED ME," HE THINKS, "AND MY DANGER-SENSE KICKED IN!"
VILLAGE SAVINGS BANK
RRRIIINNGG
ROB'S GAME
IT'S ACTUALLY A RELIEF WHEN HE HEARS THE ALARM...
GENTLE-MEN-- OUR LIMO AWAITS!
...AND REALIZES WHAT THE TRUE DANGER IS.

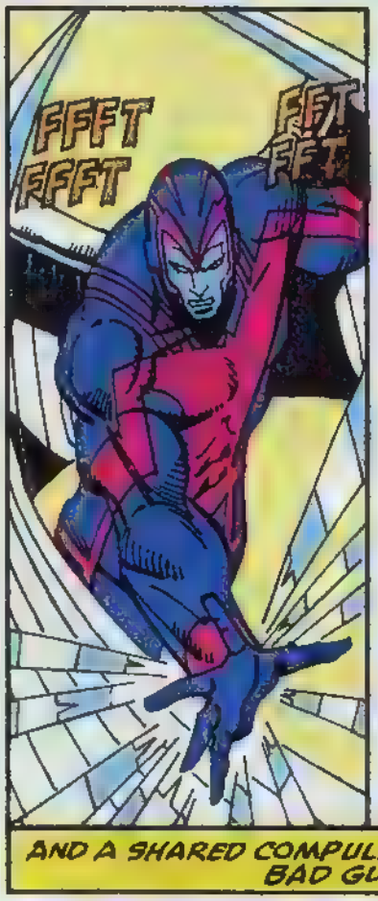

THE OLD MAN REMEMBERS THE DAY HIS BOY WAS BORN: BITTER COLD. HEAVY SNOW. YET THE WORLD SEEMED SO BRIGHT AND NEW.
WHEN HE FIRST LAID EYES ON HIM... ALL POINTY-HEADED, RED-FACED AND WRINKLED... THE BOY LOOKED LIKE SOME KIND OF ALIEN.
LIKE HE'D DROPPED IN, A VISITOR FROM ALPHA-CENTAURI TO HAVE A QUICK LOOK AROUND-- AND DECIDE IF THE HU-MAN RACE WAS WORTH HIS TIME AND INTER-EST.


"BUT WHEN I HELD HIM IN MY ARMS," THE OLD MAN RECALLS, "WHEN I TOOK THOSE TINY HANDS IN MINE... GAZED INTO THOSE TRUSTING, INNOCENT EYES... I KNEW THERE WAS NOTHING ALIEN ABOUT HIM. HE WAS BLOOD OF MY BLOOD...
MATTHEW AARON POWER BELOVED SON
BORN ~ 19
DIED ~


"...FLESH OF MY FLESH.
MATTHEW AARON POWER BELOVED SON
"MY BELOVED MATTHEW!
"OH..."


RUMMM
MM
RAKK
OOOOM!
"...MY BELOVED SON!"

HIS MOTHER SEEMED WORRIED WHEN HE SAID HE WAS RUNNING OUT TO GET SOME SHOTS OF THE ROBBERY FOR THE BUGLE... BUT HIS FATHER--A LITTLE WORRY IN HIS EYES, TOO--ENCOURAGED HIM TO GO ON AHEAD.
C'MON ...WE'D BETTER MOVE!
GET YOUR FAT BUTT IN THE CAR AND WE WILL!
TRUTH IS, HE WAS ANXIOUS TO LEAVE. TOO MUCH EMOTION... ALL OF IT CONFLICTING...CHURNING AROUND INSIDE HIM.
HEY... SOMETHING'S WRONG! I'M GIVING HER GAS--
--BUT WE'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
WHADDAYOU MEAN WE'RE NOT--
UH-OH.
"UH-OH" WHAT?
"UH-OH" THAT.
THWIP
WHICH OF YOU GUYS CALLED FOR THE "STRIP-O-GRAM"?
YAAAAH!
AND THEY DO SAY EXERCISE RELIEVES STRESS.
RUN AWAY!
HAVEN'T YOU FELLAS EVER HEARD OF KARMA? FOR EVERY ONE OF OUR ACTIONS THERE'S AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION?
HEY-- HE'S TAKIN' OFF AFTER IRA AND MITCH! I THINK WE'RE IN THE--
ACTION: YOU BOZOS JUST ROBBED A BANK. REACTION: I'M GONNA PUT YOU IN JAIL!
--CLEAR...



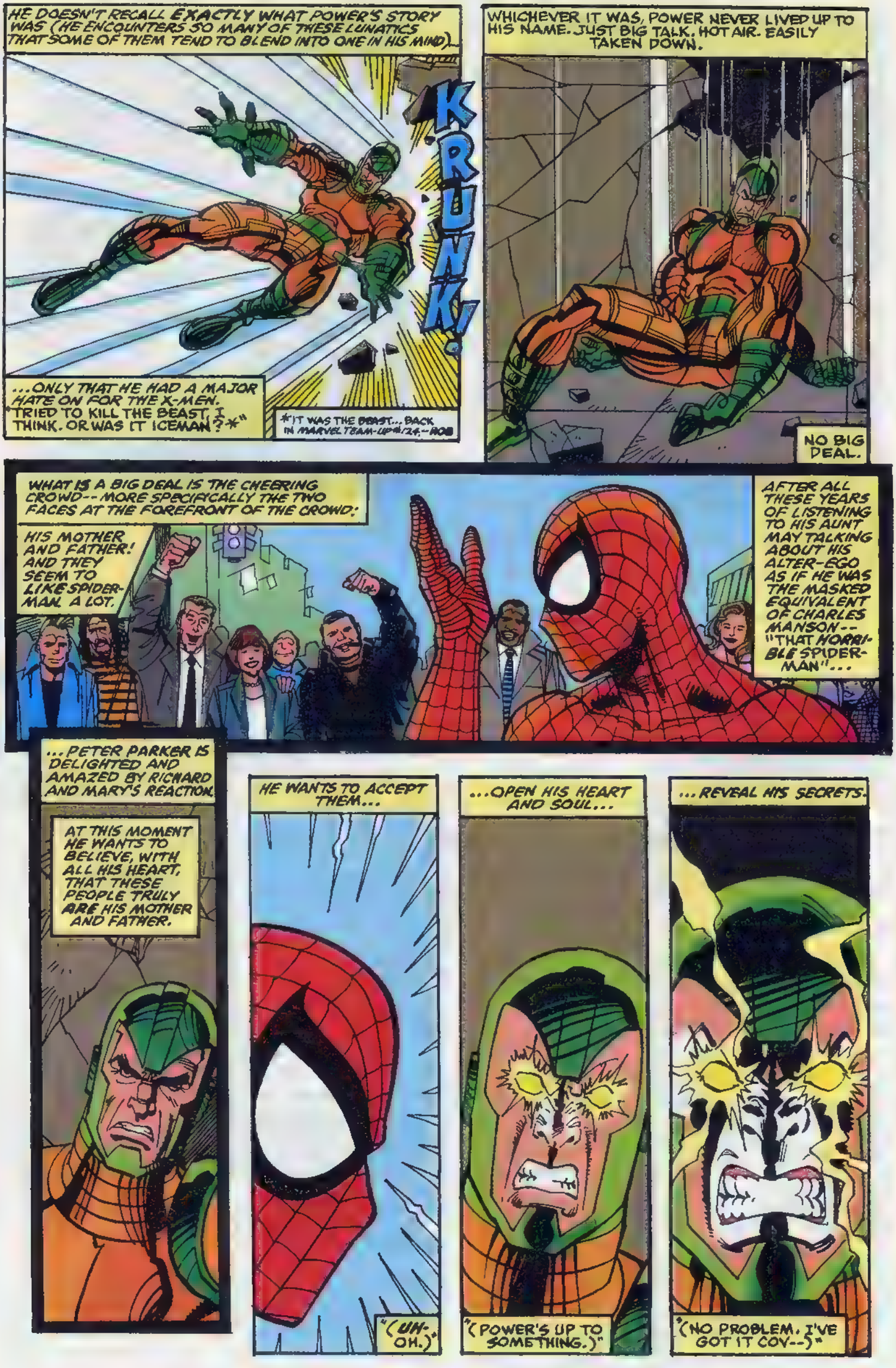
AND A SHARED COMPULSION TO STOP THE BAD GUYS.

AND IN CENTER FIELD, IT'S ANOTHER MIRACULOUS CATCH BY THE BOMBASTIC BEAST!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING? ARE YOU CRAZY? PUT ME DOWN!
WELL ...IF YOU INSIST--
NO... DON'T DROP ME! DON'T DROP ME!
FICKLE, ISN'T HE?
...HEY... WE DID IT! WE LOST HIM!
SPIDER-MAN! SOME BIG DEAL, HUH?
YOU ASK ME, ALL THOSE SUPER-TYPES ARE A BUNCH OF OVERRATED MORONS!
NOBODY ASKED YOU.
SKOOOM!
YUCK! WHAT IS THIS STUFF?
FWUPPFF
FWUPPFF
IT'S EXTRA-STRENGTH, NON-POLLUTING, ORGANICALLY-GROWN, WHEAT-FREE WEBBING--
--COURTESY OF THAT LI'L OL' "OVERRATED MORON"... ME!
THANKS FOR LENDING A HAND, CYKE! MUCH APPRECIATED.
WELL, I THOUGHT THE OTHERS COULD HANDLE THE SITUATION BACK THERE, SO--
WILL YOU KIDS SHUT UP DOWN THERE? YOU WANNA MAKE NOISE GO DOWN T'THE PARK!
YES, MA'AM. WE'LL BE RUNNING ALONG NOW.
AND RUN THEY DO...

...BACK TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME--WHERE THE POLICE ARE WAITING, THE CROWDS ARE CHEERING, AND THE HEROES ARE BACK-PATTING...
HEY...TALK ABOUT REFRESHING! WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU STOPPED A GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED BANK ROBBERY?
YEAH...NOW RETRO!
NO ANGST, NO AGONY, NO BLOOD-SPATTERED BODIES! JUST SOME MODERATE PUNCHING AND HITTING AND ALL'S WELL WITH THE WORLD.
WISE UP, GUYS--IT'S JUST THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM.
THERE HE GOES AGAIN, BEING GRIM.
HE'S JUST SEARCHING FOR A VIABLE IDENTITY. NOBODY REALLY LIKED HIM BACK WHEN HE WAS CHEERFUL.
SO...SPIDER--SINCE WE'RE ALL TOGETHER...WHAT SAY YOU JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON ON THE TOWN? A LITTLE FROLIC WITH YOUR COSTUMED COMRADES?
I'D LOVE TO, BEAST--
--BUT I'VE GOT SOME PEOPLE WAITING FOR ME...AND IF I DON'T GET BACK TO THEM SOON--
DO YOU SEE PETER ANYWHERE?
I'M SURE HE'S FINE, MARY. PROBABLY ON HIS WAY BACK TO THE RESTAURANT RIGHT NOW--
--WHICH IS WHERE WE SHOULD BE GOING.
TAKE CARE, SPIDER-MAN! GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
SAME HERE! SAY "HI" TO THE REST OF THE GANG FOR ME! OH, AND ANGEL...?
YEAH?
--THEY'RE GONNA BE WORRIED SICK.
LIGHTEN UP!
IT REALLY IS NICE TO SEE THEM," HE THINKS," I'VE ALWAYS FELT A KINSHIP WITH THOSE GUYS. I'VE BEEN HARASSED AND HOUNDED MORE THAN MOST SUPER-FOLKS...BUT THE X-MEN--
"--IT SEEMS LIKE EVERY TIME THEY TURN AROUND, SOMEONE ELSE IS TRYING TO...
"...KILL THEM...?!"
HIS SPIDER-SENSE KICKS IN: SO STRONG IT NEARLY STAGGERS HIM. AND WITH IT COMES A SUDDEN WAVE OF ANXIETY.
"WHY IS IT," HE MUSES," THAT EVERY TIME THINGS SEEM LIKE THEY'RE GOING SMOOTHLY...
"...THEY TAKE A TURN FOR THE WORSE?"
HE LOOKS SKYWARD AT THE GLEAMING FIGURE DESCENDING AT ALARMING SPEED...
...AND THINKS OF ARCHANGEL'S WORDS. "WISE UP," HE'D SAID; "IT'S JUST THE LULL BEFORE THE STORM."

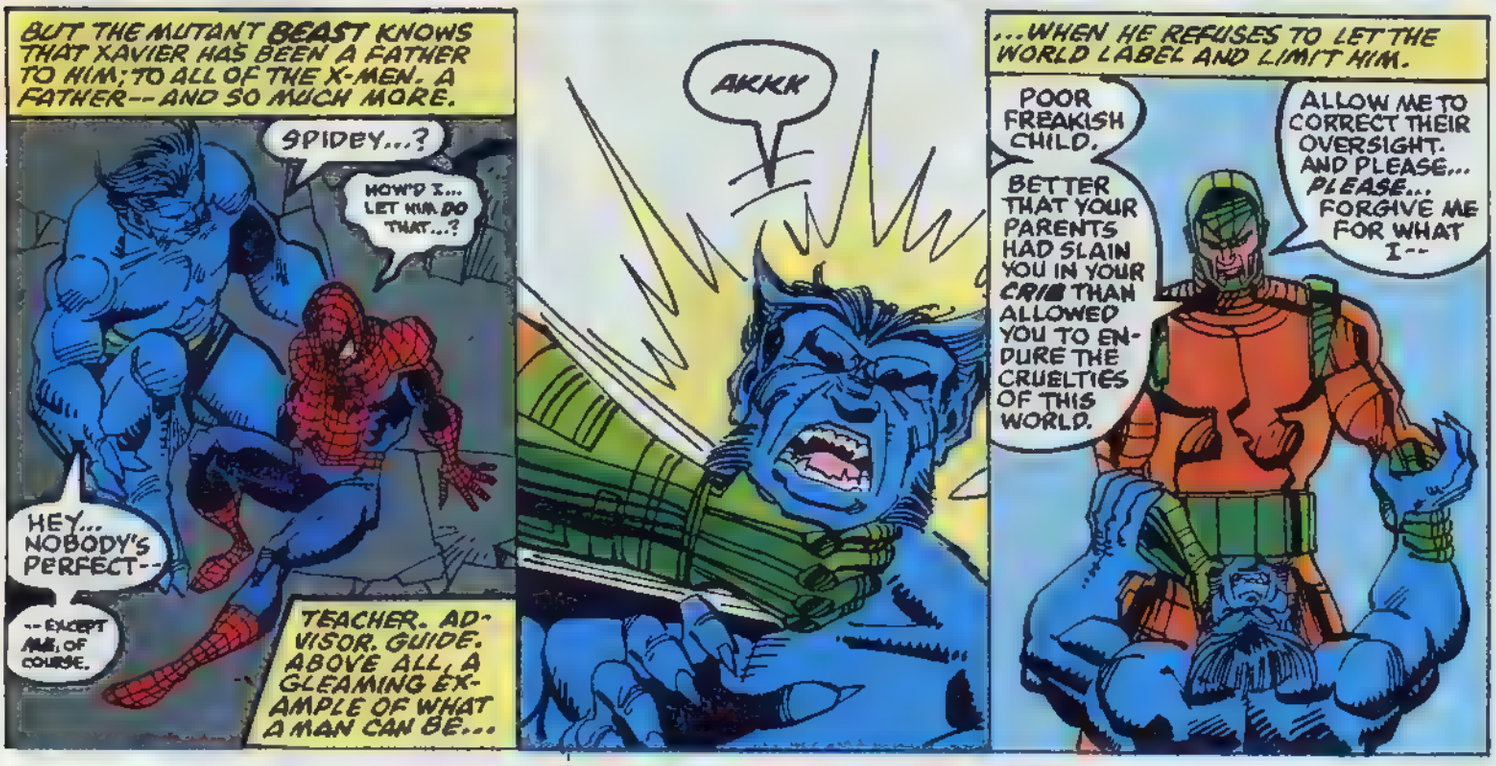
AND THEN HE HEARS THE THUNDER.
KRA-
KOOM!

SPIDER-MAN REELS...SPINS ...LEAPS!
"WHO WAS THAT?" HE WONDERS, STRUGGLING TO REGAIN HIS BEARINGS. BUT WHEN HE SEES THE WRECKAGE HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR, TOWARD THE CROWD...
...TOWARD HIS PARENTS...
OH... NO!
...HE STOPS THINKING-- AND ACTS!
THWIP
X-MEN-- THE FATHER COMES BEFORE YOU IN THE BODY OF THE SON, SEEKING RETRIBUTION. SEEKING JUSTICE. AND SO YOU DIE--
--AT THE HANDS OF--
YOU SUPER-VILLAINS ARE ALL ALIKE!
KRAK!
ALWAYS TALKING TO YOURSELVES--
WHO
--WHEN YOU SHOULD BE WATCHING YOUR BACKS!
O
M!
HE RECOGNIZES HIM NOW: PROFESSOR POWER.

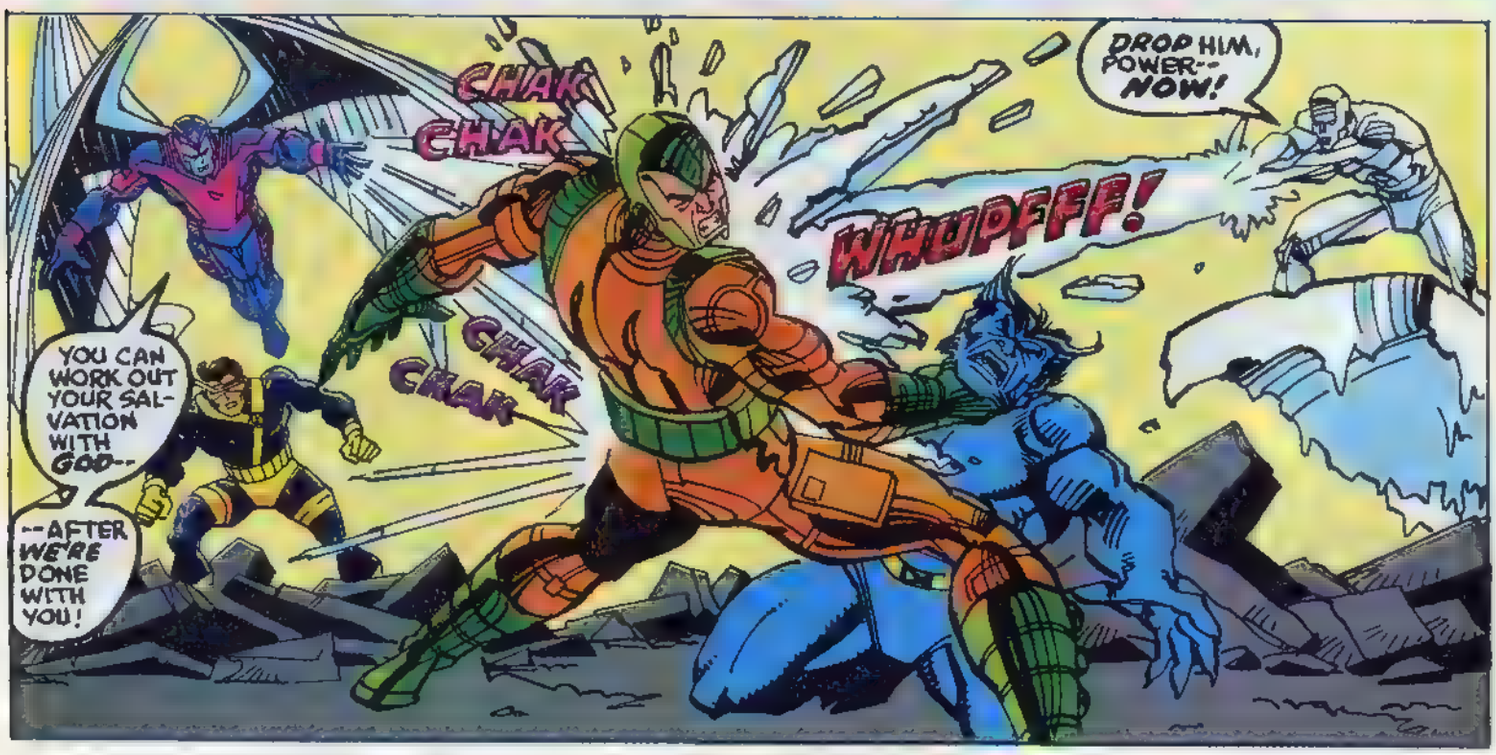

HE DOESN'T RECALL EXACTLY WHAT POWER'S STORY WAS (HE ENCOUNTERS SO MANY OF THESE LUNATICS THAT SOME OF THEM TEND TO BLEND INTO ONE IN HIS MIND).
KRUNK!
...ONLY THAT HE HAD A MAJOR HATE ON FOR THE X-MEN. "TRIED TO KILL THE BEAST, I THINK. OR WAS IT ICEMAN?*"
*IT WAS THE BEAST... BACK IN MARVEL TEAM-UP #124.--ROB
WHICHEVER IT WAS, POWER NEVER LIVED UP TO HIS NAME. JUST BIG TALK. HOT AIR. EASILY TAKEN DOWN.
NO BIG DEAL.
WHAT IS A BIG DEAL IS THE CHEERING CROWD--MORE SPECIFICALLY THE TWO FACES AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CROWD:
HIS MOTHER AND FATHER! AND THEY SEEM TO LIKE SPIDER-MAN A LOT.
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF LISTENING TO HIS AUNT MAY TALKING ABOUT HIS ALTER-EGO AS IF HE WAS THE MASKED EQUIVALENT OF CHARLES MANSON--"THAT HORRIBLE SPIDER-MAN"...
...PETER PARKER IS DELIGHTED AND AMAZED BY RICHARD AND MARY'S REACTION.
AT THIS MOMENT HE WANTS TO BELIEVE, WITH ALL HIS HEART, THAT THESE PEOPLE TRULY ARE HIS MOTHER AND FATHER.
HE WANTS TO ACCEPT THEM...
"(UH-OH.)"
...OPEN HIS HEART AND SOUL...
"(POWER'S UP TO SOMETHING.)"
...REVEAL HIS SECRETS.
"(NO PROBLEM. I'VE GOT IT COV--)"

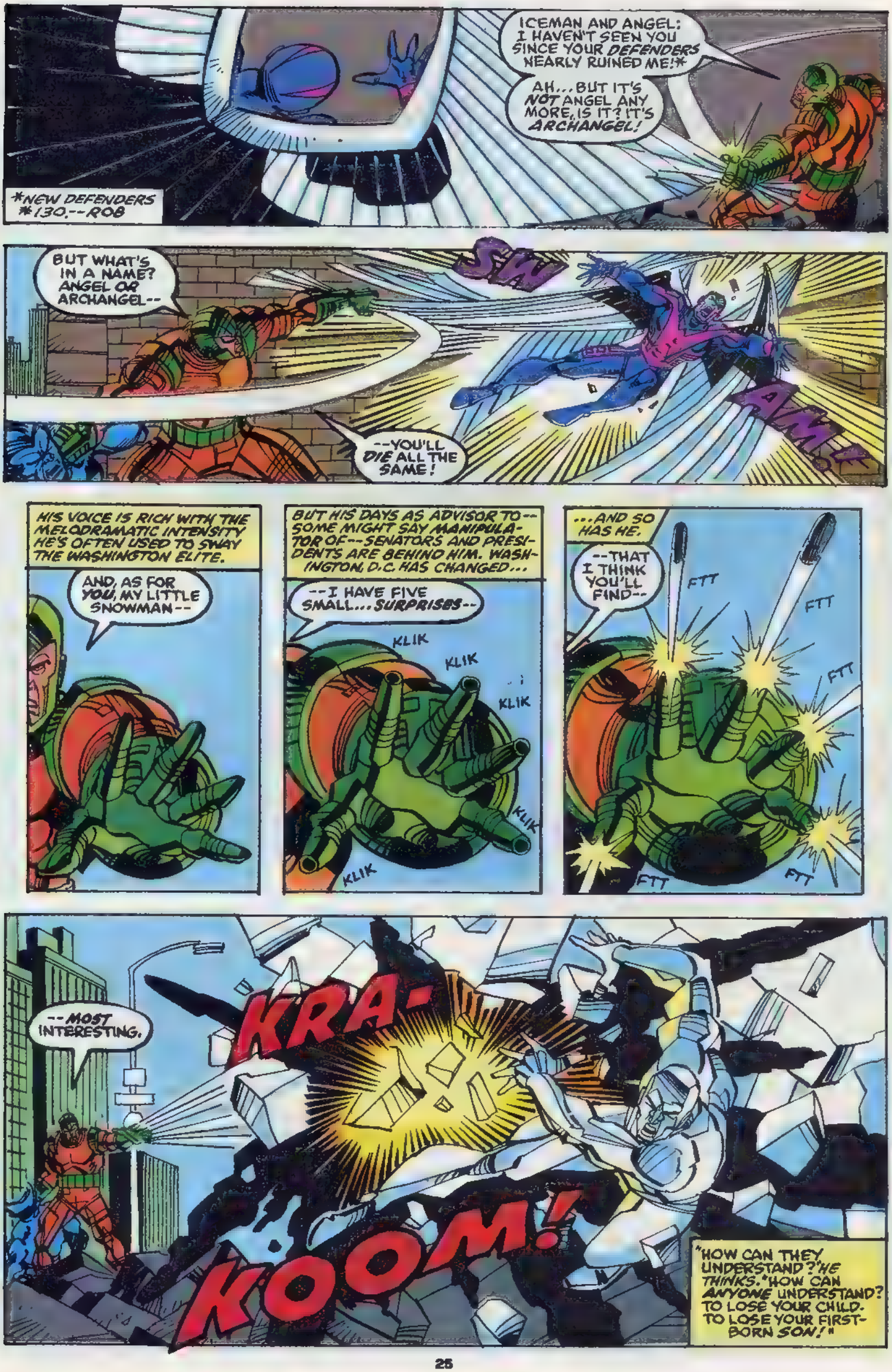
HE NEVER FINISHES THE THOUGHT.
FWA
SIH!
THE ALPHA-BURST FROM POWER'S CYBERNETIC EYES COMES SO QUICKLY, IN SO WIDE A BURST, THAT EVEN HE CAN'T AVOID IT.
"OVER-CONFI-DENT... JERK," HE THINKS...
...BEFORE HE BLACKS OUT.
BUT AS SPIDER-MAN RECEDES INTO DARKNESS, THE X-MEN RISE UP OUT OF IT.
HANK... GO--!
JUST... GIMME A SECOND... T'CLEAR MY HEAD...
SPIDER-MAN DOESN'T HAVE A SECOND!
SPIDER-MAN MAY NOT RECALL THEIR SHARED ENCOUNTER WITH PROFESSOR POWER, BUT THE BEAST DOES.
APPARENT-LY NOT!
HOW COULD HE FORGET A MANIAC WHO HAD HIS OWN CONSCIOUS-NESS FUSED INTO THE BODY OF HIS SON?
A MANIAC WHO MIGHT HAVE KILLED THE BEAST IF IT WASN'T FOR SPIDER-MAN'S INTERVENTION.
COME INTO POPPA'S ARMS, MEIN KLEINE SPINNER!
HE ENCOUNTERED POWER AGAIN, IN HIS DAYS WITH THE DEFENDERS.

HE KNOWS TOO WELL THAT POWER BLAMES CHARLES XAVIER FOR THE DEATH OF HIS SON; THAT POWER'S IRRATIONAL HATRED FOR PROFESSOR X HAS SPILLED OVER TO XAVIER'S STUDENTS. "XAVIER'S CHILDREN, HE CALLS US."
MARY... IT'S TURNING UGLY... WE'D BETTER GET TO A SAFE PLACE, BEFORE--
WE CAN'T! PETER'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE--!
"XAVIER'S CHILDREN": HANK McCOY RESENTS THAT PHRASE. HE'S GOT A MOTHER AND FATHER; A FAMILY THAT LOVES HIM.


BUT THE MUTANT BEAST KNOWS THAT XAVIER HAS BEEN A FATHER TO HIM; TO ALL OF THE X-MEN. A FATHER-- AND SO MUCH MORE.
SPIDEY...?
HOW'D I... LET HIM DO THAT...?
HEY... NOBODY'S PERFECT--
-- EXCEPT ME, OF COURSE.
TEACHER. ADVISOR. GUIDE. ABOVE ALL, A GLEAMING EXAMPLE OF WHAT A MAN CAN BE...
AKKK
...WHEN HE REFUSES TO LET THE WORLD LABEL AND LIMIT HIM.
POOR FREAKISH CHILD.
BETTER THAT YOUR PARENTS HAD SLAIN YOU IN YOUR CRIB THAN ALLOWED YOU TO ENDURE THE CRUELTIES OF THIS WORLD.
ALLOW ME TO CORRECT THEIR OVERSIGHT. AND PLEASE... PLEASE... FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I--

SHRAKKK!


CHAK CHAK
CHAK CHAK
DROP HIM, POWER-- NOW!
WHUPFFF!
YOU CAN WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH GOD--
--AFTER WE'RE DONE WITH YOU!


ICEMAN AND ANGEL: I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE YOUR DEFENDERS NEARLY RUINED ME!*
AH... BUT IT'S NOT ANGEL ANY MORE, IS IT? IT'S ARCHANGEL!
*NEW DEFENDERS #130.--ROB
BUT WHAT'S IN A NAME? ANGEL OR ARCHANGEL--
SW
AIM
--YOU'LL DIE ALL THE SAME!
HIS VOICE IS RICH WITH THE MELODRAMATIC INTENSITY HE'S OFTEN USED TO SWAY THE WASHINGTON ELITE.
AND, AS FOR YOU, MY LITTLE SNOWMAN--
BUT HIS DAYS AS ADVISOR TO--SOME MIGHT SAY MANIPULATOR OF--SENATORS AND PRESIDENTS ARE BEHIND HIM. WASHINGTON, D.C. HAS CHANGED...
--I HAVE FIVE SMALL... SURPRISES--
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
KLIK
...AND SO HAS HE.
--THAT I THINK YOU'LL FIND--
FTT
FTT
FTT
FTT
FTT
--MOST INTERESTING.
KRA-
KOOM!
"HOW CAN THEY UNDERSTAND?" HE THINKS. "HOW CAN ANYONE UNDERSTAND? TO LOSE YOUR CHILD. TO LOSE YOUR FIRST-BORN SON!"

BULLPEN BULLETINS

JOEY'S JOINT

Every so often, pundits and people in the know predict the end of the super hero genre. More often, a series of books depicting the way super heroes would behave in the "real world" threatens to be the "last word" on the subject.

Still, while these wise pundits and great series may have affected and informed the styles of current stories, the genre shows no slide in popularity, while such other comic book staples such as romance, war, Westerns, and espionage have fallen by the wayside. We alone publish enough super hero titles to satisfy even the most voracious acolyte. Why are there no signs of slowing?

Here's one answer. We're all too well aware of our own limitations in an increasingly frustrating world and its many injustices. Super heroes have no such limitations. In the thirties, super heroes vented their outrage at slumlords by tossing them off the roofs of their decaying buildings. Today, they settle the drug problem in the streets, rail against disease and death, and grapple with cosmic questions that would make Stephen Hawking's head spin. In short, super heroes hold out the promise of quick solutions to complex and baffling problems. With the exception of science fiction, of which we're an offshoot, it's the only genre that promises any solutions to society's ills. Put classically, super heroes take arms against a sea of troubles, and, by opposing, end them.

This brings me 'round to the title we're releasing this month. It's THE PUNISHER 2099.

In it, technology has made the world a colder place. Cool and distant, even the police keep a removed and alienated watch on a city under constant surveillance. It is warmed only by the hot crossfire of illegal blasters.

Down these mean streets rides the high-tech, high-velocity Punisher of the future, Jake Gallows, a man who has inherited the war diary and the thirst for justice of his namesake. **Pat Mills** and **Tony Skinner** wrote an origin and adventures that speed by at a bristling, breakneck pace. **Tom Morgan** and **Jim Palmiotti** have created slick, sleek artwork to match them.

They've created a super hero for the nineties. The twenty-nineties, I mean. We're continuing the super hero tradition into the next century ... and you get to join us!

Joey Cavalieri

Ghost Rider roasting on an open fire ... Iceman nipping at your nose ... It's the holiday season, the time for peace on Earth and good comics for all men (and women)!

Since it is the season of giving, we thought we'd approach some of our mightiest scribblers and scriveners and see what they would most like to receive this year.

Santa's little helper, **Jim Starlin**, busy launching the all-new WARLOCK CHRONICLES series in '93, is eager for a little getaway. Said Jim: "I'd like to take a trip back to Mexico — Yucatan or Quantana Roo."

THE SILVER SURFER's **Ron Marz**, who's never walked through a winter wonderland — but has slogged through a summer swampland — has needs a little closer to home: "I'd like a twelve-foot Christmas tree with lots of little white lights and a house big enough to put it in!"

THE BULL'S EYE

by Barry Dutter & Rick Parker

...AN' I WANNA BE PRESIDENT OF DA COMPANY... AN' I WANNA CHOO-CHOO TRAIN... AN'--AN' I WANNA TEN GALLON TUB OF ICE CREAM!!!
Y'KNOW, MARY... I JUST DON'T THINK TOM QUITE HAS THE HANG OF THIS "SANTA CLAUS" THING...
MR. BIG
A DUTTER/PARKER PRODUCTION!

Christmas caroller **Michael Gallagher**, the guiding star of the GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, has a very special wish for the holidays. "What I'd like to see for Christmas would be a comic book featuring the heroes who volunteered to help the victims of Hurricane Andrew when it hit here in south Florida." Michael definitely gets our humanitarian award for most unselfish wish.

Receiver of Coal in His Stocking **Rick Parker**, best-known for his cartooning wizardry here on this page and each month in MARVEL AGE, has an equally thoughtful wish. Said Rick, "I want my book, 'Everything I Really Need To Know I Learned From Television,' to sell a million copies!"

Rick's wife, BARBIE writer **Lisa Trusiani**, who believes in Santa Claus but thinks the Easter Bunny is a cruel hoax, has the perfect holiday gift idea: "I think it would be nice if my stocking was filled with BARBIE comics!"

QUASAR penciler **Andy Smith**, who once built a snowman just so he could watch it melt, has a wish that comes from his genes. Said Andy, "I want my own Levi's commercial!"

The world's tallest elf, **Larry Hama**, of WOLVERINE and G.I. JOE fame, has an extra-special wish: "World peace." Sure, Larry, but if you get it and it's the wrong size, where do you go to exchange it?

George Perez, who is dreaming of an off-white Christmas — maybe something in eggshell — is currently celebrating the release of his blockbuster two-issue HULK limited series with **Peter David**, FUTURE IMPERFECT. "The two things I most need are: time, to meet all my deadlines, and space, to keep all my reference. Space and time — the two greatest enemies of any freelancer!"

Finally we have assistant editor **Barry Dutter**, who thinks the Grinch didn't steal Christmas — he just borrowed it for a while. Barry is currently working on a graphic novel called FURY, about the early years of SHIELD, and wants to up the ante on a previous wish. "I want my book with Rick Parker, 'Everything I Really Need To Know I Learned From Television,' to sell TWO million copies! Remember, it's the perfect stocking stuffer!"

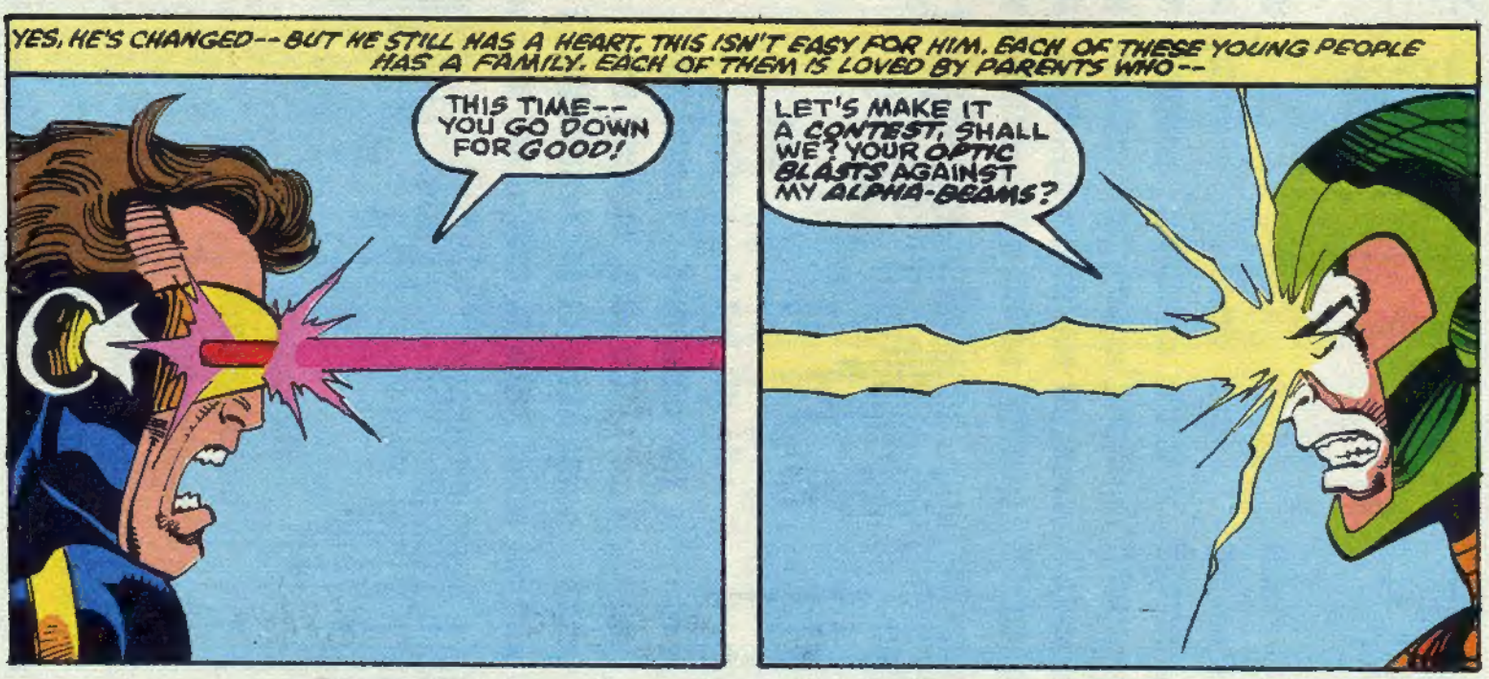
And on that note, we wish you all a happy holiday season. May your bells ever-jingle, may your egg ever nog, and remember — if you see Aunt May coming, get out from under that mistletoe!

HYPELINE: ON SALE THIS WEEK

- **A-1 #3:** Presenting king of the hill, top of the heap tales!
- **CONAN SAGA #71:** Like the sands in an hourglass, these are the days of Conan's life ...
- **DEATHLOK #20:** It's cyborgs galore with Coldblood and Siege!
- **DIGITEK #3:** This one will go down like a cup of hot tea!
- **DR. WHO CLASSIC COMICS #2:** In full colour! Reprinting the very first Dr. Who story ever!
- **THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD #2:** A reprint — and more!
- **INCREDIBLE HULK: PAST IMPERFECT:** By David & Perez! YES!!!! We proudly present this month's achievement in comics art!
- **MARVEL COMICS #122:** More Wolverine/Venom, plus Two-Gun Kid!
- **MARVEL REQUIRER #35:** FREE! And a bargain at twice the price!
- **MOTORMOUTH #9:** At last — Tom DeFalco in his own series! Just kidding. Another UK triumph!
- **NEW WARRIORS #32:** Beginning a new 4-part story with guest-stars out the wazoo!
- **PUNISHER 2099 #1:** There's all-new types of punishment in the Marvel Universe of the future!
- **SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #197:** With 4 of the original X-Men!
- **TEAM HELIX #2:** Wolverine guest stars in this series that comes from the U.K. to you!
- **WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWORLD #6:** William Shatner has always been a great writer — but did you know he's an actor, too?
- **X-FORCE #2:** In case you missed it the first time!
- **X-FORCE #19:** A major turning point in the life of the team!

*A FATHER DIES WITH HIS SON. AND, IF HE FINDS THE INNER STRENGTH TO ENDURE THAT UNENDURABLE PAIN... IF HE BRINGS HIMSELF BACK FROM THE DEAD...
MARY, COME ON--!
BUT, PETER--!
--IS NO LITTLE BOY! HE'S GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO GET OUT OF THE WAY OF THIS INSANITY--AND SO SHOULD WE!
*...HE--AND HIS WORLD...
HANG ON, CYKE...I'LL BE RIGHT THERE...T'HELP YOU...
...SOON AS I CAN MOVE...
...CAN NEVER BE THE SAME.
I'VE READ THE FILES ON YOU POWER. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD, SEVERAL TIMES OVER.*
*SEE CAPTAIN AMERICA #336 AND IRON MAN ANNUAL #13.--ROB
I'VE DIED MANY TIMES, CYCLOPS.
IN MANY WAYS.

BUT
I
KEEP
COMING
BACK.


YES, HE'S CHANGED--BUT HE STILL HAS A HEART. THIS ISN'T EASY FOR HIM. EACH OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE HAS A FAMILY. EACH OF THEM IS LOVED BY PARENTS WHO--
THIS TIME--YOU GO DOWN FOR GOOD!
LET'S MAKE IT A CONTEST, SHALL WE? YOUR OPTIC BLASTS AGAINST MY ALPHA-BEAMS?

NO! HE CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT!
SHHH
HRRRRRRRAAAAKKKKK
ALL HE CAN ALLOW HIMSELF TO THINK ABOUT IS HIS BOY.
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S FORCING THE BEAM BACK--
HIS MATTHEW.
--INTO MY--
AYYEEE!
I SUPPOSE I WIN, THEN-- DON'T I?
THE NAME FUELS HIM, FIRES HIM. HE DIDN'T COME THIS FAR... GO THROUGH THE AGONY OF HAVING MATTHEW'S CORPSE DUG UP AND CYBERNETICALLY RE-CONSTRUCTED... JUST TO GO SOFT NOW.

YOU HAVEN'T WON YET!
OOOM!
TOOOOM!
TOOOOM!
DOOOM!
I'M AFRAID I HAVE.
NO GOING SOFT. NO TURNING BACK. "ENJOY THE TRIUMPH," HE TELLS HIMSELF. "SAVOR THE SWEETNESS OF THIS MOMENT. YOU'VE DONE IT. YOU'VE DONE IT!"

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!
HE LAUGHS LOUDLY, WILDLY--BUT THERE'S NO JOY IN IT. THE SOUND IS FALSE, STRAINED--UTTERLY HOLLOW.
AS STRAINED AND HOLLOW AS THE GRIN--MORE LIKE A DEATH-MASK THAN A SMILE--ON PROFESSOR POWER'S FACE.
"PITY THE POOR CHILDREN," HE THINKS--EVEN AS THAT HOLLOW LAUGHTER ECHOES ON THE AIR.
"DYING...
"...FOR THE SINS OF THE FATHER."
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!